



Education Watch

Enhancing Flexibility & Accountability ■ Leaving No Child Behind

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No Child Left Behind Promotes English Fluency

Ensuring that all children, regardless of their background, have the chance to succeed is a central purpose of the public education system.

Unfortunately, many Limited English Proficient (LEP) children face significant barriers to making the transition from their native language to English. Research has consistently shown that English language learners, when compared with their English-fluent peers, tend to receive lower grades and often score below the average on standardized math and reading assessments.

President Bush's *No Child Left Behind* plan emphasizes flexibility, accountability, and parental choice. It focuses federal funding on teaching LEP children how to speak English by holding states and local school districts accountable for ensuring that students are proficient in English after three years of attending school in the U.S.

Moreover, the bill requires districts to obtain parental consent before placing children in an instructional program that is not taught primarily in English.

It is unfair to force LEP children to spend needless years of instruction in their native language and never achieve English fluency, a key factor in determining one's future success. The President's plan ensures that LEP children won't be left behind.

Message of the Day

H.R. 1 puts Limited English Proficient (LEP) students on the quickest path to English fluency.

- ❑ *Children in current bilingual education programs fall behind their English-fluent counterparts.*
- ❑ *The No Child Left Behind bill holds states and local school districts accountable for ensuring that LEP students learn English.*
- ❑ *Parents should be given the opportunity to give their consent before their children are placed in a class not taught primarily in English.*
- ❑ *H.R. 1 ensures that LEP children won't be left behind.*

DAILY EDUCATION FACTS

- Test scores in the San Diego Oceanside School District skyrocketed after California ended its bilingual education program -- 7th graders improved their reading scores by 475 percent and math scores by 155 percent; reading scores for all grades rose on average by 180 percent and math scores by 120 percent.
- According to English for the Children, from 1998 to 2000, California elementary school English learners most affected by the curriculum changes (in grades two through six) raised their mean percentile scores by 35 percent in reading, 43 percent in mathematics, 32 percent in language, and 44 percent in spelling.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Two years after Californians voted to end bilingual education and force a million Spanish-speaking students to immerse themselves in English as if it were a cold bath, those students are improving in reading and other subjects at often striking rates, according to standardized test scores." **Jacques Steinberg, *The New York Times*, August 20, 2000**